

REARING THE SLENDER BURNISHED BRASS:
DIACHRYSLA ORICHALCEA (FABRICIUS)

By DAVID BROWN and ANDREW GARDNER*

In an area of overgrown waste ground on the floodplain of the river Avon at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, a female of this rare migrant noctuid was attracted to the Heath trap belonging to Mr. Ray Bliss, at 11.30 p.m. on the 30th of July 1983. The specimen, which was in very good condition when captured, began to lay almost immediately on the sides of a pill box. Later, on being transferred to a larger container, it continued to lay very freely on various surfaces, including glass, and altogether 180 eggs were deposited.

The Egg. Is creamy-yellow, of a distinctly glossy appearance, hemispherical in shape and without any outstanding surface features. Generally laid singly, the eggs were also deposited in a few groups of up to eight in number. They were kept at room temperature (60-65°F.), and in 6 days began to darken immediately prior to hatching.

The Larva. The newly hatched larva measures about 2mm. in length, is pale green and slightly transparent. Initially given garden Coreopsis, we later tried them with more readily available food sources such as dock, dandelion and potato leaves, all of which were accepted.

Three days after hatching, they were transferred to five plastic boxes, at which time they measured 6-7 mm. in length, with dark spiracular lines tapered dorsally to a blackish head. On the fourth day we decided to keep half at room temperature and the other half at 90°F. The effect of this treatment on the latter batch resulted in an immediate and marked change in the rate of growth, with after only one day an increase in length to 11-13 mm., while those at room temperature had reached only 8-9 mm. The former were now darker green, with a clearly defined yellowish-white lateral line running the length of the body, and above this a faint black spot on each segment; a series of white lines along the arch of the back, of varying thickness and clarity; body sprinkled with white hairs; head, claspers and legs green.

Further foodplants were introduced, including Woody Nightshade and tomato leaves, all of which were eaten, but potato seemed the most favoured, though at the higher temperature, there was evidence that dock caused diarrhoea. After seven days, those at 90°F. measured about 18-20 mm. in length, while those at room temperature were considerably smaller though apparently still in good health. Those 'forced' at the higher temperature reached full growth after only 14 days and with no losses.

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The final instar larvae measured 34-38 mm. long, and were of a light green hue, the yellow lateral line now very prominent; the white dorsal lines somewhat wavy and of varying widths; the black spots one on each segment just above the yellow line, and below the latter a series of relatively faint yellow spots and markings; on the hind segment a large conspicuous oval mark; the white hairs now quite prominent.

The larvae cocooned either by spinning together two leaves, or by making a flimsy silken tent amongst the paper tissue lining the container, the whole process taking only 2-3 hours. Despite being fairly overcrowded when full grown, the larvae showed no inclination to cannibalism. After about two weeks, some of those kept at room temperature began to die; the survivors were accordingly transferred to hotter conditions (90°F), but too late for most, and only 15 of this batch pupated successfully.

The Pupa. Dark mahogany brown, slender in shape and 20mm. long with wing cases $\frac{2}{3}$ the pupal length. The pupae were kept at 85-90°F. and sprayed with water daily. The adults emerged after only one week, and were well formed. There were very few casualties.

About 15 pairs retained alive for further breeding were fed on diluted honey and sugar. These were kept at varying temperatures, but only one definite pairing was noted and all the resulting eggs were infertile.

THE SILKY WAINSCOT: *CHILODES MARITIMUS* (TAUSCHER) IN NORTH LANCASHIRE, SD 47. — During 1983 while trapping at a local Nature Reserve to provide a list for the site, I took two specimens of *Chilodes maritimus* ab. *bipunctata* (Haworth), in a Robinson trap. It was July 12th-13th and the night was such that the large numbers caught made counting all of each species impractical: there were about 70 species present. In the same catch were six *Mythimna straminea* Treits., also noteworthy for N. Lancashire.

The provisional distribution map does not show *C. maritimus* anywhere in the area and it seems worth reporting it as apparently the most northerly record. — ERNEST E. EMMETT, Beck House, Hornby Road, Caton, Lancaster, LA2 9QR.

COMMOPHILA AENEANA HBN. (LEP.: COCHYLIDAE) IN BUCKS. — On 15.vi.84 I found this moth on the outskirts of a wood on the extreme western edge of the county. I thought this would be the first record for Bucks, but Mr. Martin Albertini tells me that he caught a specimen of the moth near High Wycombe on 26.vi.81. My example was taken in one of the reserves of the Berks., Bucks. & Oxon. Naturalists' Trust and I am most grateful for BBONT's permission to collect in the area. — LT. COL. W. A. C. CARTER, Briarfields, 4 Sandels Way, Beaconsfield, Bucks.